

Q: Good afternoon. Today is October 4th, 2018. My name is Helene Tischler, and I'm here at the Newton Free Library with Mr. Robert Read. Together we are participating in the Newton Talks oral history project, that is being conducted with the Newton Free Library, Historic Newton, and the Newton Senior Center. Thank you, Mr. Read, for being here with us.

A: Thank you.

Q: So we do want to talk about your experiences in the service and what happened before, after, during. But first, what's your connection with Newton?

A: I came here when I was about three years old, because my father taught at the old Day Junior High School. And we lived on--well, actually we lived on Washington Street very briefly, and then we lived on Cherry Street over near the Waltham line--

Q: Right.

A: --then my father built a house in West Newton on a recently developed street in that area. What was interesting--the street--we lived on Byrd Avenue, and the parallel street around the corner was Lindbergh. And I never quite understood why the street at the end was named Rose. But it was Margaret Rose, Lindbergh, and then Byrd, and that was the era in which that street developed. From there I started in the Newton schools.

Q: So where did you go for elementary?

A: Well, I went to Davis School. Went home for lunch in those days. And then continued in the Newton Schools. I didn't go to Day. I was right on the borderline. We thought that because my father was at Day, it would be better if I went to Warren. And then from there I went to Newton High School, and graduated from Newton High School. In what year... '45, 1945.

Q: Okay. Great. So you have a longtime relationship with Newton.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. Were you in Newton before you entered the service?

A: Yeah, well, as I said--

Q: You stayed. You established--

A: I graduated from Newton High School--

Q: Right, and then you stayed--

A: --in '45, June. And I went into--I was drafted--I went into the service in July of that '45. So yes, I was living in Newton, living in my family. Graduated from high school--actually I had applied to and been accepted by a college, but then was drafted and went into the service immediately.

Q: Wow.

A: And if people remember the dates, I went in to basic training down in Florida, and about the eighth week of basic training was in August, and the war in Japan was over. That's when they dropped the bombs on Nagasaki. And we were being trained at that time with bamboo huts, as it were. And we were learning how to attack Japanese soldiers in bamboo huts. And then when they declared that the war was over, we stopped training that day as of, I don't know, one o'clock

or something. And then when we came back the next day, they said "You guys are not going to go to Japan and capture bamboo huts"--

Q: Right.

A: "The word is, you guys are going to go to Europe, and relieve the guys that have been sitting over there, because the war over there has been over for about six months. And so you're going to be doing that. And we have no training program for whatever you're going to be doing there." So they told us like, "Lie down and look like you're learning something, and if we see any brass coming, we'll blow a whistle and everybody look busy." But we did go through a lot of the training. We still marched and shot rifles and learned about weapons and so on. We just didn't practice fighting Japanese soldiers.

Q: Right.

A: And then after that--I remember very well--Thanksgiving 1945, I arrived home to have Thanksgiving dinner with my family here in Newton and then reported back to Fort Dix in New Jersey, and was sent overseas and arrived in Le Havre on Christmas Day of 1945. And that was the beginning of my overseas duty.

Q: Okay. So how old were you exactly at that time?

A: 18 at that time.

Q: You were 18 years old.

A: Yeah. 18 in April before I graduated and continued to be 18.

Q: So what branch of the military did they put you in?

A: Well, no, we were in the Army.

Q: Yes.

A: I was assigned to a couple of different divisions, but finally ended up with the 78th Division, which had been prominent in the capture of the bridge at Remagen--

Q: Right, right.

A: --and some of that. I saw no combat. I don't know where you want to go with the rest of that, but that was a very interesting time for me, and frankly, a very pleasant military duty.

Q: Really? That's great. What was it like when you got there?

A: Oh. We came in--first of all, we were on a couple of literally boxcars, 40&8's. And we got moved around a couple times, and we arrived on New Year's Eve in a town they tell me was "Neustadt," which means "New Town." I think it must have been a million "Neustadts", but--that was a place which had been used for a youth--a Nazi youth training camp. And they had bunk beds and showers and so on. And we were riding in this boxcar, and it was cold, and we were--we had our sleeping bags and our packs on our back, and the idea of the sleeping bag was to roll them up very, very tight, so they didn't flop apart. And once you rolled it up that tight, you're really reluctant to undo it.

Q: Sure.

A: And it was colder and colder. And finally I got up to go to the bathroom and I heard all this banging on the walls, and the guys are yelling "Happy New Years!" And I thought, "I can't stand this anymore, I've got to unpack this sleeping bag." So about two o'clock in the morning, I unrolled the sleeping bag, broke the tape, got it out. Four am in the morning, they said, "We're here now!" And we got out, and it was so cold out there. And they said, "We're going up to that place over there." You could see some building in a short distance. So we went over there. I was never the head of the line in the service, but that was the one time I was there. It was so cold, I was running up there. But they put us there briefly so we could get showered and could have some food. Really not very luxurious, but compared to what we had been through in the boxcar, it was really pleasant for us. We didn't have to do anything in particular.

Q: Right.

A: And then they put us in another boxcar, and we didn't know where we were going. And we spent another...oh, day or so. And I woke up in the morning and looked out and it looked like a suburban area or something. And we called out and we said "Where are we?" And some of the fellows were Jewish, and so they spoke Yiddish and that was enough so that they could communicate.

Q: Understand the German--

A: Then somebody said, "Schlachtensee!" We said, "What the heck is that? What town are we in?" "Berlin!" "Hey, guys! We're in Berlin!"

Q: Really?

A: Terrific. So that's why I said we had a good experience, because then we were broken very quickly into groups and went out to--it would be very comparable to Newton, Waltham...

probably a little more like Newton, quite frankly.

Q: Really? Pretty suburban. Yeah.

A: Yeah. Victorian houses, kind of which had been commandeered, a bunch of them. It would be like taking a group of houses in West Newton, or something. And then they just put bunks into the dining room, living room, or whatever you want to call it. And we got housed in there. And the thing that was good about it was that eventually we found out that--we'd all gone through basic training together--

Q: Right.

A: --and so we were always Yankees in southern culture exposed to all these surprises. They had separate eating and drinking for Blacks and--Coloreds and Whites, as they had on the window. And that had been somewhat of a revelation. The people who trained us were heavily from the south. But we were all Northerners together. But then when we got into Berlin, they began to break us up more and put us in different kinds of outfits. And I remember the thing--the story I love to tell. We went into one of these rooms where they had packed together some bunk beds. I went there and there wasn't much of anybody else with me, I was assigned there. And I grabbed one of the bunk beds and the Army issued a pocket book, like paperbacks, but they had their own. And I'm lying there looking at it, wondering what's gonna happen next. Another soldier came in. "Hi. I'm Arthur Pippins. Who be you?" I said, "Well I'm--my name is Bob Read." And he said, "What you doing? Reading a book?" So Arthur and I hit it off. Drew some guard duty, and...down to the Reichskanzlei, where Hitler died, and Brandenburger gate, with the chariot on the top of the gate. So we were down there guarding that stuff which was being sorted by military and civilian hirees. And then sometimes I would have guard duty just outside. And there were--in those days, Berlin was divided into four sectors: French sector, English sector, Russian sector, and American sector. But if you know that or don't know it, the whole of Germany was

divided into four sectors. And Berlin was in the middle of the Russian sector. So we were in the American sector of the quadripartite Berlin, in the middle of the Russian sector of quadripartite Germany.

Q: Interesting.

A: And that was a little bit of a problem, because we couldn't get in and out easily. There was a road and a train. The train came in and out once a day. The road was guarded by Russians all the way along, and the trucks were searched and it was controlled. So we didn't move around very much. But we didn't really have to, because Berlin was so rich at that period of time that--it's kind of a pun. You know, the music scene never missed a beat.

Q: Interesting.

A: Here we were, like six months, five months after the war was over--

Q: Right, right.

A: There was chamber music, symphony concerts, two opera houses, all kinds of amenities--a circus, a racetrack--all that still going on in the city. But when you said what did it look like when I got there, after that we traveled a little bit in other parts of Europe, and there was no city that could come even close to the devastation of Berlin. Our bombing had taken that down right flat.

Q: Yeah.

A: And what we saw in general was these wiped out blocks of buildings, just flat, and crews of German men and women picking up--chipping the cement off bricks and stacking them--they

had them on little carts--cleaning up the rubble. That's what they had to do. I think that if they didn't do that, they wouldn't get a meal ticket.

Q: Right, right.

A: And they had a serious problem from--for food at that time. We didn't have trouble, but they did.

Q: Were they working with the--for the American sector or the Russians? Is it the Russians that made them do that?

A: No, I think that was universal.

Q: That was universal.

A: And there was a quadripartite government.

Q: Okay.

A: OMGUS--Office of Military Government U.S. And it was a collaborative leadership on the part.

Q: Right.

A: But it was also apparent to us--we would see trains, railroad trains going out with all kinds of machinery--occasionally our Jeeps--going back to Russia. They were looting the country at that time.

Q: Right. And you could see that. Did you have other interaction with the Russians?

A: Well, I digressed, because I was talking about pulling guard duty, and we would see the Russians out there.

Q: Right.

A: And we'd talk with them a little bit, but it was mostly hand signals and things like that. But we saw the Russians around, and in those days--this was before the Berlin Wall went up--and so we flowed easily from one section to the other, and you would see Russians. And so we had some contact with them. We had a lot of contact with the British and some with the French. So it was pretty, in those days, fairly friendly relationships.

Q: Okay. And were you aware of what really--you said the rubble and destruction--what any interaction with the civilian populations?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Did you have duties related to that?

A: All kinds of--first of all, I want to say in general, we had marvelous relationships with them, and they had marvelous relationships, if for no other reason than because we weren't the Russians.

Q: Right.

A: Before that time, if you read novels and reports at that time--they were scared to death, rightly so--

Q: Yes.

A: --of invasion by the Russians. And there were mass rapes that transpired at that time. So they were pretty friendly with us. And I must say, you know, I don't know, maybe I was friendly with somebody who was a Nazi executioner or something, but our interactions were friendly and...about the place where I eventually was stationed--assigned--was in a big complex comparable to a GE headquarters. And the person who ran it was a German man--he was before and he was then. And then we had a German lady who came around--I have a picture in my photo book of her picking up our laundry for us. And the thing--I have to go back a little bit. When I was pulling the guard duty, they eventually--I got a call one day. I'd been there maybe two months. I was supposed to be a light machine gunner in an infantry company, but I pulled guard duty just with a rifle or something. And I'm back in the room without the Pippins in the bunk, and somebody says "They want you up at BD (Berlin District) headquarters." What have I done now? I said, "What's --" "Don't ask questions soldier, just do what you're told." So I went up to BD headquarters. As I said, we had been out in these suburban homes, and they're alright, but--and boy it was nice, and they said, "Well"--you know, it's just about lunchtime, and they said, "The reason you're here, soldier, is that we're setting up a school actually under the aegis of the civilian office"--what do they call it...civilian mili--civilian employees, the military.

Q: Right, right.

A: And this man had a uniform kind of looking outfit, but with no insignia on it, no rank, no nothing. And he said, "We're looking for people to staff this school." By implication, we might like to have you do that.

Q: Ah.

A: Well, I thought, this sounds kind of interesting, a lot better than walking around at night looking at Russians. So they said, "But it's time for lunch, so why don't we"--So we went over to a single story large building in the middle of the complex, and we went in. And there were young German girls in little black uniforms with little white caps on and people kind of standing in line. But we eventually sit down, and the little capped *mädchen* come along and ask you--there's a couple choices, do you want coffee or tea, is there anything on the menu, which is this little piece of paper, that you don't want. Better than standing in a cold cow line! So that was nice. And they said something like, "Do you want to have some soup?" Yeah, well, anybody can have soup, there's a big vat of soup here. And we do pretty well because of the cooks we have--they're not army cooks, they're German hotel cooks that are cooking for us. And the food was much better than ordinary army food.

Q: Sure.

A: And they talked some more, and that was pretty delightful. And they talked some more and said, "Would you like to teach school?" "Who's going to go to this school?"

Q: Right.

A: Well, not Germans. This is for GI's who didn't have a fifth grade education, and also GI's who would like to have a high school education.

Q: Interesting.

A: So yeah, I became a teacher. I don't know why. They give you the AGCT, which is the army--it's like an IQ test.

Q: Right.

A: I scored well on that. And I must have said someplace that I wanted to be a teacher or something--only explanation I can think of. I was just a high school grad, what was I doing here?

Q: Right, right.

A: But it was good. They put us in this industrial complex type of thing, think GE. And we had some rooms that maybe were offices before. We had a suite of rooms for half a dozen GI teachers like myself. We were in what they called detached service. We got little or no recognition from our 78th Division Company. On the other hand, if we didn't bother them, they wouldn't bother us.

Q: Right.

A: So it was really kind of like being in a college dorm. Decent people who kept the place fairly clean--

Q: Right.

A: We did what we wanted to, and if we weren't teaching a class--we had a pass in those days to let you go all over the city, and so we would go to these events that I mentioned--go to the opera, go to a concert. We would go to German--we'd see American films with German dubbing on them. So we did that. We did a number of recreational things. I often think--the Russians, when they cut the city up, they have the big industrial part of the city.

Q: Right.

A: And the British got a big section of general business and downtown and so on. And the French got a little sliver of not much of anything, because they were persona non grata. And the Americans got the recreational part.

Q: Interesting.

A: And we were out at Wannsee, which would be kind of like Cape Cod. It was a lake and summer homes there and so on and so forth.

Q: Right, right.

A: So we were there. And so--as I said, we had a very nice duty. We taught our classes and when we didn't teach our classes, we kind of did what we wanted to do.

Q: How many people were in your classes?

A: Well, very few. And this is the kicker: one of them was Arthur Pippins.

Q: Really?

A: So...and furthermore, Arthur Pippins outranked me, because we weren't part of the regular company, so they weren't giving us any rank or anything--

Q: Oh, I see.

A: You come as a company, you can decide you're a Corporal. But Arthur Pippins stayed with the company and he got to be a Corporal.

Q: Oh, really.

A: But that was just a little side-light. But it was amazing to me that we did have a large number of people--American soldiers...Oh, and the other thing was--the staffing of it, who was teaching them--

Q: Yes.

A: Well, obviously the people that I mentioned--

Q: Right.

A: --were teaching. Then the civilian school would come over to set up the school. Some of them taught. And the rest of the teachers were German nationals--

Q: Interesting.

A: --in Berlin--

Q: Right.

A: --delighted to work for the American government teaching American GI's how to read, write, and spell.

Q: And math, maybe.

A: When you asked if we had good relationships--yeah, we had good relationships with those people.

Q: Interesting. That's interesting. So there was no recognition among the GI's about what these people may have been involved in? Did the Army do anything to educate you or prepare you for some of--

A: Let me think about that...it doesn't come to mind particularly.

Q: Just curious if you had any interactions that made you aware of what they had been involved with.

A: In those days, we were allowed to fraternize. There was not a ban against that.

Q: Right, right.

A: We probably got some kind of a lecture or two, but no, that was not a major issue.

Q: Okay. Interesting.

A: Both of us kind of liked working with each other.

Q: Right.

A: One of the things that happened, where I spent a lot of time in the Army at service clubs--what do they call--USO's.

Q: Right, right.

A: But the--also the American Red Cross ran clubs. They were kind of in competition with each other. I don't understand exactly how that worked out. And there were Red Cross clubmobiles that would go out, actually in areas where people were training or fighting or something, and open up the side door and serve coffee and donuts. But they also had clubs in town. As a matter of fact, in Berlin I think...I think there were four or five in Berlin alone. And they were--they were kind of what you'd--like a neighborhood club, that is they would have a little coffee place, they would have activities, they would have trivia night. And furthermore, they would put on events. One year they put on a Fourth of July--that would have been for the Germans. And the Germans were there staffing the fishing pool and the "Guess the beans" and all of that kind of thing.

Q: Sure.

A: Once again, I had very good relationships. I was friendly with a couple of the club directors, and they had German assistants who became very fond of each other. So that was the--kind of the ambiance--

Q: Right.

A: --of the occupational Army. After we left, I think they began to tighten up and get more regular Army-ish.

Q: Right.

A: So it was a wonderful time during that middle period--

Q: Right.

A: --of transition.

Q: How long were you teaching in the service?

A: Well, I was overseas. I said that I had Thanksgiving dinner with my family, then I returned. I was discharged early--convenience of the government. So I was in the Army something like 16, 17 months.

Q: Oh.

A: And...that...yeah. 16 or 17 months, of which four or five were basic training. And so I arrived home in time for Thanksgiving of 1946.

Q: Right, right.

A: And as I say, I was technically in the Army for another month, but I was at home by that time. And...

Q: How did you keep in touch with the family while you were in Europe?

A: Ah, good question. We wrote letters. But in this marvelous mess hall--I think the peak of my military experience was the mess hall.

Q: Of course. At 18 I can understand.

A: There was a telegraph office, as it were. And I never thought about it, but I needed--I think it was a fountain pen, who knows...so whenever we came in we just sent a message home. You could do that. But one day I wrote a message and said, you know, like, "I need a fountain pen,

send me a fountain pen." Well my mother told me on the other end, they get this call from the military government that your son in Germany has sent you a telegram!

Q: Oh my goodness!

A: Of course, you know what goes through their minds.

Q: Of course.

A: "Send me a pen!" So I would send more letters back and forth fairly decently.

Q: Yeah.

A: One a month or something.

Q: So it was easy. And people weren't home sick? It doesn't sound like you had that experience of being homesick.

A: That's interesting. No, I don't think so. I think maybe if you were homesick, they got homesick in basic training.

Q: Yeah, yeah. More than when they went to Europe.

A: And it was a great time--Oh, one of the things that happened: shortly after we were there, about the time that I was going to teach school, some of the fellows were with me, and one of them whose name is fairly well known here in Newton, Johnny Recco. Johnny Recco was the all--what did we call...All-Star multi-sports hero. He played baseball extremely well--as a matter of fact, was picked up by the Red Sox. Never made anything out of it, but he was picked up by

the Red Sox. He also played hockey, he played basketball. He was just--and he was a very nice guy. And in those days Newton High School put us in our homerooms by alphabet.

Q: Right.

A: So Read and Recco had been together for a long time. And Johnny was overseas, and he ran into a fellow, and he said, "Oh!" He said, "Are you so-and-so?" He said, "Did you play hockey for Arlington High School?" He says, "Yeah, yeah. You're that guy that played for Newton, right?" He said, "Yeah." He says, "The old GBI league, we're all over here together--Arlington, Belmont, Melrose."

Q: Interesting.

A: He said, "You ought to get with us!" So--and I guess one of the coaches was somebody from there--so the old GBI basketball league became the Berlin hockey team, and did extremely well. They played against Finland, they played against other military groups. That was the old Newton and suburban league for sports.

Q: That's amazing. Really exciting.

A: Yeah.

Q: Wow. So it doesn't sound like they were really homesick! They were having a good time.

A: They replicated home overseas, I think.

Q: So mostly you felt it was positive experiences you had? Was there anything else memorable about your time there, or in the service?

A: I suppose there were many memorable things about that--little incidents and anecdotes. I would say that--said right at the beginning, I had a good--you could never bet on it, you know.

Q: Right.

A: Another time it wouldn't necessarily happen that way.

Q: Right, right.

A: But it was a great experience for me. One of the things we did--three of us hired a German who used to work for the German state department or government to tutor us in some German. That was nice. And then when I came back, German was my language for college and things like that.

Q: Interesting. So it really did have an impact later on?

A: Yes, it had a lifelong impact. And then I used GI Bill for--I had a small scholarship when I graduated from high school, and that plus the GI Bill got me through my undergrad work. And I had enough leftover, so I also paid for most of my Master's with the GI Bill. I continue to get medical services from the VA, both my prescription drugs and a couple of my specialists.

Q: So where--

A: The Army has done very good to me.

Q: No, that's great. It's good to hear! So the return to civilian life was pretty smooth?

A: Yeah.

Q: Applying for schools, and--had you applied to school before you got drafted?

A: Yeah, I had been accepted at Bates before then. And then when I got out, in the--at Thanksgiving, it would be logical to go back to a second semester.

Q: Right.

A: But Bates--some colleges did in those days, because the GI's were coming back, and you could start middle-year and go in the summer a month or another. Bates was not such a school. So I went to BU. Kind of at the last minute, my father knew somebody and went in and talked to someone and they said, "Oh, well you can come here if you want. You've gotta register tomorrow." And I said, "What's the hurry?" They said, "Classes start the day after tomorrow." And I never left BU. I stayed and graduated from BU as a result of that. I'm sorry, I lost track of the question.

Q: No, no, that was fine. Just what the transition was like--what you did afterward. And what did you major in, later on? You mentioned you took German, German was your language, but--

A: Let me say one other thing. Every--all those students--BU prospered at that time. That's when they built that new campus and things like that.

Q: Right.

A: But everybody was in Army garb--Army field jackets, Army coats, Army this, that, and the other--a lot of GI's wearing leftovers. And I applied to the contact my father had, who was with the state Department of Education. So I applied to the School of Ed. And then after about two

years, I met with my adviser and she confronted me with the fact that I wasn't taking a lot of the required basic ed courses, that I was going to be taking quite a few English courses. And I remember very well, [33:46]. She said, "Mr. Read, you don't have Principles of Education here." I said, "Well, I'm going to take that eventually." I said, "But right now, I thought it would be important as an English teacher to have a good background in English." "Well, Mr. Read, if you think English is what is important, maybe you should be in the College of Liberal Arts rather than here in the School of Ed!" And I said, "I think you're right," and I transferred to--

Q: Did you really?

A: And I still continued to get my teaching background certificate, but I graduated from Liberal Arts at that time.

Q: Right, right. And did you end up teaching English?

A: Yes. I took some courses and then eventually I ended up doing practice teaching out here at Wellesley. And I am quick to say that one of my students was Sylvia Plath.

Q: Oh, wow. Amazing.

A: And I also want to say somewhat facetiously the poor girl couldn't write a sentence until I got a hold of her. That's not true. She was very sharp, she was publishing in those days.

Q: Even then.

A: And they had a--they didn't have AP courses in those days, but all the heavy hitting students ended up with Wil Crockett's English class. And they socialized together and one thing or another, and so I was his student teacher--a wonderful experience.

Q: Wow. That's great.

A: And Sylvia and some of those other people were in that class. And we--he and I were responsible for directing the senior play. And Sylvia was in the senior play. So we had some contact there.

Q: Interesting.

A: So, yeah. And then from there I went on and became an English teacher in Attleboro. How much more do you want?

Q: No, no. It's interesting. So do you feel that teaching in Germany all those years ago made an impact on what you wanted to do? Did it influence you?

A: As I said, you know, I was pretty much headed in that direction anyhow.

Q: Right. It sort of went to your interests at the time. That's great. Did you ever return to Germany?

A: Yes. Yes. Two or three times. I'm very fond of Germany still. And I ended up eventually getting--going back to BU and getting a doctorate from BU. And the doctorate I got there was in something called "Counselor Education." And what had happened during that period of time was that school guidance counselors had emerged as a field--a certification area and so on.

Q: Right, right.

A: And what I had done with what was left--I said I had some time left on my GI bill--so I didn't want to waste it, and the word was well, they're not going to extend it. You have to use it or you're gonna lose it.

Q: Right.

A: That was not true--

Q: Oh.

A: --but that's what they said. And so I got about half of my Master's out of the GI bill. And my Master's was in this new thing called "Guidance Work," which was a little stronger in other parts of the country than it was here. So someplace along the way I emerged as a guidance counselor and then a guidance director and other related areas. I got into a little bit of college work, went back to BU--and BU in the meanwhile had generated a program under the Department of Defense of providing Master's degrees to Americans--once again, not German, but to Americans--civilian workers for Deere Tractor or whatever, and military personnel and their spouses. They had a school program in--as I remember, approximately 20 areas of--well, there were two in Italy, I think one in Brussels, and--

Q: So Western Europe. Right.

A: And what would happen was that BU would have a secretary and they would have two or three apartment houses. And then faculty would go overseas, supposedly from BU--

Q: Right.

A: --but a lot of BU people didn't want to go. And besides, staffing all 20 of these was quite large. So they would draw people from any place they could to teach in these Master's degree programs. So let's say if you were in the Army, and you were what they called a 20-year man--that means you could get a half pension--at the age of 39, 41, 42, you could graduate, you had a Master's in guidance counseling, and you could get out and get a job in civilian life, and variations on that theme.

Q: Right.

A: And so we would spend one semester in one area--in my case Heidelberg--and then second semester we would go to another place--in my case Zurich. And we would do that. And then...furthermore, the one in Zurich you taught in the summer. And it was very comparable to what we have here. The students were all working in the daytime or on active duty, so there were late afternoon or evening classes, and during the daytime we were free. Even better than living in the [39:41].

Q: Did you go with your family at that time?

A: Yeah. Took our family. My wife was a speech therapist. She--at that time she eventually did some college teaching. That was one of the hardest parts of it, because she felt that she was kind of abandoning her career. And then the two children were elementary-school age.

Q: Yeah. But that must have been a great experience for them.

A: Yeah. So that was a good experience for all of us. And we skied and we went around and so on.

Q: Sounds amazing. So we're gonna be wrapping up in a minute or two. This has been amazing. Is there any message you'd like to sort of put on tape for people looking at this a hundred years from now, or later on about your time in the military?

A: I came to be interviewed, not to be profound.

Q: Just any last thought to leave us with. It doesn't have to be that profound.

A: Well, relative to what we're saying here. When I was a guidance counselor--and since then I do continue to have this thought, and not just because of the program's affiliation with the veterans--the military is not the right answer for everyone, in any means. But it's a terrific way out and up.

Q: Right.

A: And if a lot of other doors are closed to you and you don't know what to do--and you know, you can go in for 20 years, you can go in for--make a career of it. The military emphasizes education now, and they're recruiting, not killing people, but education.

Q: Right.

A: And for a lot of people it's a terrific opportunity to break the mold and move. The fact that all the GI's--what happened with the GI's in general was that they were all moving on the track, post-depression track, they weren't going much of anywhere, and all of a sudden they were pulled out of there. They met new people, maybe they got some courses, and they broke the chain.

Q: Right.

A: And we created a whole wonderful society, I think, in those years after that. So there's a message there for the individual, but there's a message there for us as a country, that this is a pretty good opportunity, and if you've not thought about it before, you ought to think about it a little bit.

Q: That's great. You should work as a recruiter, because it's very effective. Your story was amazing. Thank you so much for participating in this project, volunteering and coming to speak with us.

A: Well, thank you for inviting me.

Q: We really appreciate that. It's been amazing, really interesting.

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